

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF TH LA
SUBJ: LOWLAND LAO REFUGEE INFLUX INTO NONG KHAI PROVINCE

THE FOLLOWING TEL REC'D FM UDORN DATED 07 JUN
SENT ACTION BANGKOK REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION

QUOTE
UDORN 0132

REF: (A) UDORN 0131 (B) UDORN 0090
(C) UDORN 0068 (D) UDORN 0032

1. IN REFTTEL A, PARA 5, WE NOTED OUR IMPRESSION THAT INFLUX OF
LOWLAND LAO REFUGEES INTO NONG KHAI PROVINCE HAS INCREASED
NOTABLY LATELY.

2. NONG KHAI IMMIGRATION CHIEF CONFIRMED THIS DEVELOPMENT
WHEN HE PROVIDED CONREP JUNE 3 WITH STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF MONTHLY
FLOW OF REFUGEES INTO PROVINCE SINCE NOVEMBER 15, 1977. ACCORDING
TO THIS REPORT, NUMBER OF LOWLAND LAO ARRIVALS JUMPED FROM 309 IN
FEBRUARY TO 789 IN MARCH, FOLLOWED BY A FURTHER INCREASE TO 1119
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IN APRIL AND 1150 IN MAY. TOTAL NUMBER OF REGISTERED LOWLAND LAO
ARRIVALS AT NONG KHAI DURING SIX AND HALF MONTHS COVERED BY
STATISTICAL SUMMARY IS 3882, (THIS TOTAL ALSO INCLUDES SMALL
NUMBER OF THAI DAM AND VIET-LAO).

3. RECENT STEEP INCREASE IN NEW LOWLAND LAO REFUGEES MAY IN PART
BE RELATED TO NONG KHAI AUTHORITIES' RELAXATION OF RTG EXCLUSIONARY

POLICY FOLLOWING BEGINNING OF HMONG INFLUX FROM PHU BIA MARCH 1. (SEE PARA 2 AND 3, REFTEL B) THIS SOFTENING OF EXCLUSIONARY POLICY EXTENDED BEYOND GRANTING OF ASYLUM TO HMONG REFUGEES. IT ALSO INCLUDED PERMITTING LOWLAND LAO REFUGEES DETAINED IN PROVINCIAL DETENTION CENTER, WHO HAD RELATIVES IN NONG KHAI REFUGEE CAMP, TO BE ADMITTED INTO REFUGEE CAMP ON PERMANENT BASIS THIS MEASURE PRODUCED FIRST LARGE TRANSFER OF LOWLAND LAO REFUGEES (400 PERSONS) SINCE LAST NOVEMBER FROM DETENTION CENTE TO REFUGEE CAMP MARCH 7. AT LEAST SIX LARGE TRANSFERS REFUGEES FROM DETENTION CENTER FOLLOWED IN APRIL AND MAY.

4. COMMENT:

WHEN NUMBER OF NEW HMONG ARRIVALS AT NONG KHAI PROVINCE SINCE MIDDLE OF LAST NOVEMBER, NAMELY 600 FROM VMU MA THAO AND 2200 FROM PHU BIA, IS ADDED TO LOWLAND LAO INFLUX, GRAND TOTAL OF REGISTERED REFUGEE ARRIVALS FOR PAST SIX MONTHS EXCEEDS 6600. THIS TRANSLATES INTO AVERAGE OF ABOUT 1100 REFUGEES PER MONTH, A RATE THAT APPROACHES LEVEL OF REFUGEE INFLUX INTO PROVINCE PRIOR TO INAUGURATION OF EXCLUSIONARY POLICY.

5. WE NOTE FUTHER THAT NUMBER OF NEW REFUGEES (ALMOST ENTIRELY LOWLAND LAO) ENTERING UBON AND NAKHON PHANOM PROVINCES ALSO APPEARS TO BE ON RISE. UBON REFUGEE CAMP OFFICIALS TOLD CONREP MAY 15 AN ESTIMATED 3000-4000 REFUGEES ENTERING THESE TWO PROVINCES HAVE BEEN ADMITTED INTO UBON CAMP SINCE JANUARY 1. THIS TOTAL REPRESENTS A MONTHLY AVERAGE OF 600-800 NEW ARRIVALS. (AN ADDITIONAL UNCLASSIFIED

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NUMBER OF NEW REFUGEES, TOTALLING SEVERAL THOUSAND, ALSO ENTERING UBON CAMP DURING THIS PERIOD CAME FROM REFUGEE POPULATION WHICH HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY RESIDING IN UBON AND NKP PROVINCES' BORDER DISTRICTS.) UBON CAMP OFFICIALS TELL US PRIVATELY THEY ESTIMATE THEIR CAMP'S POPULATION NOW EXCEEDS 19,000.

6. CONREP VISITS TO SURIN AND LOEI REFUGEE CAMPS DURING LAST WEEK OF MAY REVEALED ONLY SMALL NUMBER OF REFUGEES HAVE ENTERED TWO CAMPS SINCE BEGINNING OF YEAR, ACCORDING TO OFFICIALS AT CAMPS. SURIN CAMP OFFICIALS STATED THAT MOST OF NEW CAMBODIAN REFUGEES ENTERING NORTHEAST ARE BEING SENT TO MOI DETENTION CENTER IN BURIRAM, CURRENTLY HOUSING 335 CAMBODIAN DETAINEES. LOEI CAMP OFFICIALS REPORT THAT NEW HMOMG AND LAO ARRIVALS CURRENTLY NUMBER 30-40 MONTHLY, BUT THAT HALF OF THESE ARE MERELY ILLEGALLY MOVING IN FROM OTHER REFUGEE CENTERS IN THE REGION.

7. IN CONCLUSION WE CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATE THAT, BASED ON ALL OF INFORMATION ABOVE, CURRENT TOTAL REFUGEE INFLUX INTO REGION IS AVERAGING 1800-2200 PER MONTH. AS COMPARED TO MONTHLY AVERAGE OF 800-1200 EARLIER THIS YEAR (JANUARY AND FEBRUARY).

SIGNED FINNEY

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